



PHOTOGRAPHY/ BRUCE HILLS

las, the sentimental journey confronted barbed defiance at this juncture, where the fence forced a grudging detour.

# 'Express' mail told a twisted tale

Third in a series

By Bruce Hills

Deseret News staff writer

In eastern Nevada, the Pony Express trail is marked only sporadically by signs, so you don't always know if you are actually on the right track — especially when you come to a fork in the road and must decide on one of two or even three roads.

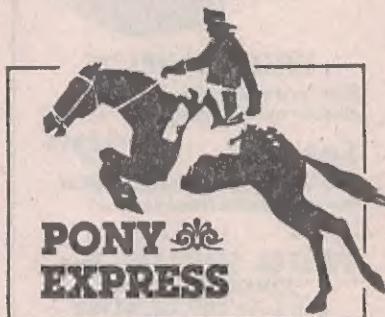
Steve Banks and I were traveling by pickup truck, pulling a dune buggy, west from Salt Lake City on the Pony Express route. Not infrequently, we would take the most likely looking road from the fork and drive 10 to 20 miles before coming to a dead end. He and I finally learned to pick the worst looking road. Generally, it turned out to be the Pony Express trail.

The road in eastern Nevada is rough, rocky in spots, ankle-deep in dust in places, wet and muddy on occasion and narrow and twisting. In many places the road is a river or creek bed. We wonder what the road would be like in a long, hard rain. Luckily, we had dry weather for most of our trip.

We were not able to drive on some of the trail in central Nevada because it is so bad in places it simply does not exist. However, the trail meets U.S. 50 in several places and either follows U.S. 50 or is close to it for many miles in central and western Nevada.

As you travel westward through eastern Nevada you occasionally see small concrete markers or wooden signs beside the road designating the trail as the Pony Express route, but these signs are many miles apart and there are few, if any, other signs to tell you where you are.

There are no signs or monuments marking the station sites in eastern



Nevada, so you must depend on maps and your odometer to tell you where you are. If signs were ever put up, they have been vandalized.

On several Pony Express maps published by the Bureau of Land Management and the state of Nevada, the stations are marked on the map, but there are few remains of any of the stations left in Nevada.

The only Nevada station that is intact is a re-creation of the Ruby Valley Station that has been moved to Elko, Nev., some 50 miles north of the Pony Express trail. It stands in front of the Northern Nevada Museum in Elko.

Along the eastern Nevada trail, most of the station ruins that still exist are on private land some distance from the trail so you cannot see them from the trail. One of the few vestiges of the 1860s is a cemetery called the Fort Pierce Graveyard. This can be easily seen from the trail.

The cemetery consists of four graves marked with wooden monuments and surrounded by wooden fences. Historians believe one of the graves may contain the remains of a Pony Express rider killed in the line of duty.

The Pony Express maps Steve and I saw showed only a few modern cit-

ies and few modern highways. The modern highway maps do not mark the Pony Express trail — so you look from one map to another through eastern Nevada trying to find out where you are.

Steve and I were able to drive nearly 150 miles through eastern Nevada on the trail before we had to detour at a place where barbed wire fences have been erected and a swift, deep creek crosses. In this area, the trail has turned into farm pastures.

We headed south from that point about 40 miles to U.S. 50 and then west to Eureka. From there we skirted the Pony Express route for approximately 40 miles, linking up with it again near Austin. From there the trail moves close to or onto U.S. 50 for more than 80 miles.

At Sand Springs Station site (whose stone foundations have been excavated), the Pony Express heads westward over what were two dry lakes in 1860 and 1861. The lakes are full of water today, and even those Nevadans who have tried to ride horseback over the route there, past Carson Lake, have had difficulty.

One rider, Paul Saralegui, 28, who manages the Cold Springs Station, a gas station and restaurant on U.S. 50, said he and a friend tried to ride across the area on horses in 1976 during the Bicentennial celebration when the trail ride was being re-enacted.

"My friend's horse got belly deep in mud, and we both turned our horses back. The Pony Express trail there just doesn't exist any more," Saralegui said.

Steve and I could find no sign or marker on U.S. 50 that tells where the trail crosses the lakes. We continued on north to Fallon and then linked up again with the trail at Fort

Churchill, a state park where the adobe ruins of an Army fort still stand.

There is a museum at Fort Churchill and plaques that tell of a giant lake that once stood on the site, 16,000 years ago. Fort Churchill was built in 1860, and its headquarters building was the stopping point for the Pony Express.

From there, the trail winds along dirt and gravel roads through small towns and along a wide river until it meets a paved highway into Carson City. The trail then continues on U.S. 50 to Jacks Valley Road and then through a valley that reminded us of the Cache Valley, to Genoa, an old Mormon community, and finally up a steep mountain road called Kingsbury Grade to Stateline where, a mile east, Friday's Station once stood.

Today, the only monument to the Pony Express near Stateline is in front of Harrah's Club, a gambling casino.

Up Kingsbury Grade, you can see the original Pony Express trail cut into the mountainside, a narrow, twisting, steep, rocky road that exists only in places because the new road has covered it in many areas.

Al Barber, a circulation driver for the Tahoe Tribune, whom we met on our ride, told us about a landslide in the winter of 1982-1983 that closed the main highway from Carson City to Stateline.

"So the post office trucks took the Kingsbury Grade until the main highway could be cleared and reopened. The local newspapers made quite a bit about the fact that the mail was taking the old Pony Express route," Barber said, chuckling.

Next: On to Sacramento, Calif.



# dering Utah boxers, as Chris Schwenke, winning 'impossible'

well  
writer

lif. — Sometimes it's dan-  
e after dark.

Schwenke discovered that  
e Forum.

is been forced to move up  
t division after failing to  
heavyweight, dropped an  
decision to unbeaten Tim  
s Angeles.

ose, but Schwenke closed  
rounds and dominated the  
as, and I've followed his  
win the fight," said a Los  
riter as he visited the  
room following the bout.

nd," said Schwenke, who  
rounds, I got my second

18-4-1 after beginning his  
ecutive wins. Two broken  
his father and no home at  
made the past year an un-  
fighter managed by Salt  
ector John Holmes.

in Salt Lake, the situation  
very difficult, if not im-  
mes. "The travel, home  
is has been training here  
because there are inad-  
ers in Salt Lake."

that way.

anny "Little Red" Lopez  
title at the Salt Palace, a  
ally by ABC Sports. The  
die News and Jeff Schell-  
e pairings in the popular  
n.

board is bare. Why?

oters just lost interest,"  
n't know much about the  
ing fights in Utah, but I  
some people too."

crowd was San Jose's Joe

Gagliardi, who promoted a number of fights in  
Salt Lake City several years ago.

"The big drawback is transportation costs,"  
says Gagliardi, whose fighter on Monday's  
card was chilled at 2:02 of the first round by  
Los Angeles' Henry Hearn. "It costs so much  
to fly in and out of Salt Lake. I can almost fly  
as cheaply to New York as I can from San Jose  
to Salt Lake. And when you don't have enough  
local talent to help put together a card, and  
you have to fly boxers in, I would need a  
\$30,000-35,000 gate just to break even." Gagliardi,  
who also owned the Salt Lake Gulls  
baseball team for a year, added, "There's  
nothing wrong with Salt Lake as a sports  
town."

Holmes disagrees with Gagliardi's assess-  
ment that there's no local boxing talent in Salt  
Lake.

"I have three good fighters myself," he says.  
"Tony Montoya Jr. has won his first eight  
fights and he's ready to break out. Middle-  
weight Scott Ochoa is 10-1, and then there's  
Chris."

"I was in the service when fights were popu-  
lar in Salt Lake," says Schwenke. "I have  
fought in Utah only once. It would be nice to be  
able to fight at home and have people behind  
you."

Schwenke sported a bump over his left eye  
and red welts on his right arm following Mon-  
day's loss. "My timing wasn't there," said  
Schwenke, who hadn't fought in eight months.  
"I didn't try to knock him out, because I need-  
ed to go 10 rounds to get ready for my next  
fight" in the Stroh's cruiserweight elimination  
tournament at The Forum, a fight which is no  
longer there.

"He was a little rusty, but I thought he won  
the fight," said John Holmes. "But I've seen  
him better."

Holmes and Schwenke are now making  
plans to return to Las Vegas in hopes of get-  
ting a fight — preferably on national cable  
television — within few weeks.

There's no sense going home.

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## rs extend ' contract

(AP) — The Hartford Whalers an-  
they have extended the contracts of  
nd his assistant, Claude Larose, by

for the Whalers in July 1983, two  
Francis was hired as president and  
reshape the NHL team.

ed the Salt Lake Golden Eagles for  
se signed two-year contracts when  
s now have been extended through  
on.

lers finished last in the Adams Divi-  
ight season. But they won nine more  
vious season, reduced their goals-  
record 403 to 320 and increased their  
to 288. The Whalers lost only two of  
and upset the playoff-bound New  
bec Nordiques, Buffalo Sabres and  
n the final two weeks.

ched the NHL's California Seals and  
both of which folded. "Security is  
g," Evans said, remarking that he  
a fortune cookie that read, "You are  
loyment." "That kind of thing sends  
in this business," Evans said.

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